TOPICS OF THE STAGE AS VIEWED IN WASHINGTON

A Notable Week

Miss Allen's Brilliant Production and Miss Walsh's Impressive Play—What the Two Represent—Plays in Prospect.

It was not Miss Allen's beautiful performance of "The Winter's Tale" alone that made this past week remarkable in our annals of the stage. Miss Walsh's "Resurrection" was hardly less worthy of notice and study. At either theater the mind was fully occupied. At either theater the acting was unusually even, the investiture was accurate and illusionizing, and the star surpassed the most generous expectations. The week was rich theatrically. We shall not soon look on its like again.

"The Ninety and Nine" at the Lafayette, did not add to the prestige of melodrama. Doubtless there were many who enjoyed the play, but the clientele of the Lafayette is, on the whole, as discriminating as that of any theater in Washington, and it bestows its support according to its discrimination. Mme. Slapoffski and the Milton and Dolly Nobles company made the bill at Chase's well worthy of that house.

An Unending Progress.

"The Winter's Tale" was chiefly noted and it gave pleasure chiefly for Miss Allen's brilliant impersonations. The art of this actress seems to be always evolving from a chrysalis. Away back in 1888 she appeared here as a young girl star in a comedy called "Talked About." The comedy failed—but not the star. She was greeted as a young woman of extreme promise in the lighter and more conventional roles.

Then came the discovery—in the course of her experience with the Empire Theater Stock Company—that in the modern "dress suit" or parlor play Miss Allen had no equal. Next she advanced into independence as a star, produced a dramatized novel which was regarded by ten managers out of every eleven as a certain failure, and took it about the country in a perfect whirlwind of favor.

Then came another dramatized novel to complete the test and then—Shakespeare. It is now much to be doubted if any other actress on the American stage controls an equal support from the public in classic comedies.

This actress' popularity is now so much a matter of fact that it occasions no comment. Yet it was entirely unsuspected even by Miss Allen's management when she appeared in "The Christian." The impression prevailed everywhere that her position was due rather to long service with the Empire Theater Company than to any personal favor she might enjoy among the patrons of that company. The first season was calculated, therefore, as a means of introduction. When her name had become sufficiently known there would then be time enough to make her tours profitable. This, it must be noted, was the view of the management. What Miss Allen and her personal associates thought is another matter.

Encouraged to Shakespeare.

The outcome is familiar theatrical history. In Washington, Baltimore, small cities in Pennsylvania, Boston, the smaller New England cities, everywhere through the Middle West, Chicago, and half the country besides, her audiences swamped all the records of the Empire Theater Company. Men and women traveled half a day each way to see her in one performance. The season not only made Miss Allen known—it made her and her managers financially secure.

"The Eternal City," which followed "The Christian," was a second-rate play. Here and there were flashes of real dramatic fire. But the play was neither good as literature nor strong as drama. Nevertheless, Miss Allen not only held together the following she had obtained with "The Christian" but broke all the records of that play.

Then came the broad step. She was to do Viola in "Twelfth Night." What a shock that was to the fraternity of managers may be guessed from the circumstance that the decision was averted until Miss Allen had parted with the firm which produced the two Hall Caine plays. It was bad enough to undertake Shakespeare; but to select "Twelfth Night" with the memory of Nielsen and Rehan, Modjeska and Marlowe, Terry and Wainwright fresh in everybody's heart—the woman was inviting disaster. If she did, disaster was an unwilling guest, and did not put in an appearance. Likewise, artistic failure stayed away. And the actress who once gave promise of success in society roles had become a successful exponent of Shakespearean comedy.

Rosalind or a New Play?

"The Winter's Tale," was sufficiently discussed in these columns last Tuesday. The play is not over pleasing of itself. But it acts better than it reads, and if given the personality of a charming woman it attains a charm all of its own. Miss Allen's acting in it is distinctly an advance over anything else she has done. It does not suffice, however, to lift "Winter's Tale" to a rank with "Twelfth Night." More than one good critic, indeed, thinks the latter play the freest expression of Shakespeare's genius.

What Miss Allen plans to do next year is not announced. Perhaps she will essay Rosalind. Why not? She would antagonize no more tradition than when she undertook to act Viola. But Beatrice would become her more fully, and Cordelia—if anyone could find a full-sized Lear—would fit her best of all. It may be, ill counsel will prevail and that she will be dissuaded from continuing in Shakespeare roles for the sake of something new. If so we shall grit our teeth, smile as sweetly as may be over our disappointment, and prepare to enjoy the new play as best we can.

Miss Walsh as Maslova.

Miss Walsh acts Maslova well. The impersonation is at all times impressive, occasionally thrilling, and only once offensive. To those who have read Tolstoy's novel that "only once" will be significant. It should be said further, in justice to Miss Walsh, that her offense is directly due to the playwright who puts lines into her mouth in the second scene of the second act which no actress could recite without making the character descend to the level of strumpetry.

That was, of course, Maslova's station; but Miss Walsh could doubtless have betrayed the woman's degradation without indicating her practices. At any rate she did so far restrain all the rest of the scene that this one slip seemed to hurt. So much for adverse criticism of Miss Walsh. The impersonation was in all other respects admirable.

Of the play—it is the same old question. Undoubtedly it does much good. Undoubtedly, if it were presented as a sermon and not as dramatic art, and if the audiences could be regulated, it would be a great blessing. But neither of those conditions is met.

As it stands "Resurrection" pretends to be art—to be a thing of beauty and the expression of an ideal. What it is, in fact, is known to everyone—a coarse, brutal, discouraging, despairing, dreadfully ugly presentation of a problem which has worried the world since the Stone Age.

Neither are the audiences limited. The good it does lies in its lesson for men. Perhaps, incidentally, certain women may profit by it. But it is insistently dangerous to boys and girls. It is a full education in the methods of seduction for the one and a shocking view of feminine wickedness for the other.

Assuredly it would better not be played.

Three Sterling Actors.

The star proves her right to high station among contemporaneous actors. Her permanent position, however, is still to be determined. Acting such roles in such plays as "Salambo" and "Resurrection" will not serve. She must create some such a place for herself as that now filled by Miss Russell, Mr. Willard, Mr. Irving, Mr. Mansfield, Miss Allen, Miss Adams, Mrs. Fiske, Mr. Sothern, Miss Marlowe or even Mr. Irving, if her name is to last. It is a singular thing that as no man ever found permanent fortune by assassinating his king so no actor ever found permanent rank by acting "the great realities of life." Yet both have often seemed to succeed.

"Resurrection" gave great pleasure in one respect which was entirely unexpected. It presented Miss Helen Ware. On the instant the mind does not recall a single other young actress under thirty years who promises so much. She has proven genius for character—for in the play, after her appearance as the Princess Marie, she hides herself from the entire audience, critics included. But her greatest prospect lies in the delineation of character and the expression of emotion in what actors term "straight" parts. It is the simplest thing to do—and the hardest. All the eventualities of the stage are ahead of her, stagnation, retirement, unqualified success. Those who saw this company last week will not forget to watch which one of the three it proves to be.

Mr. von Mitzel ranks well with these two women. His role was difficult and his performance fine. He also promises much.

Next week's bills include delicate little Annie Russell, in a new play, "Brother Jacques;" Mr. D'Orsay, in his admirable characterization of Lord Cardington; a good musical comedy—if press notices from other cities are to be trusted—and characteristic vaudeville. There is no prejudgment in the assertion that all four theaters will reward their patrons.

The palmiest of the good olds days could not have been more enjoyable.

ANNIE RUSSELL,
Starring in a New Play, "Brother Jacques."

At the Theaters.

National—Annie Russell.

Charles Frohman is giving the playgoers of this city an early opportunity of seeing Miss Annie Russell in her new comedy, "Brother Jacques," which will be presented at the National Theater this week. "Brother Jacques" is from the French, and is said to give Miss Russell unusual opportunities.

This artist's sympathetic and gentle style of acting, and the winning girlhood she puts in to her creations, have won her a popularity that is widespread and undisputed. Her Catherine, Miss Hobbs, and Princess Elaire, in "A Royal Family," some of the noted triumphs she has achieved since she became a star, are the pleasant memories theatergoers have. Her appearance in a new character is always awaited with interest, for it means a fresh and delightful revelation of her art, and is sure to bring forward a heroine that people gladly take to their hearts.

In the new comedy she is said to have a charming role—that of a young girl who feels the first awakening of love. The comedy is said to be good, intrinsically, and Mr. Frohman is relied upon to give it a handsome production. It will be presented here under Mr. Frohman's personal direction, and in exactly the same manner as in New York, where it is to serve Miss Russell for her annual metropolitan season.

An excellent company will support the star. The cast includes Joseph Wheelock, jr.; George Wilson, Oswald Yorke, Grant Stewart, Mrs. Charles Walcot, Elizabeth Johnson, Florida Pier, and others.

Columbia—"Earl of Pawtucket."

Kirke La Shelle will present Lawrance D'Orsay in "The Earl of Pawtucket" tomorrow evening at the Columbia. This merry play by Augustus Thomas ranks with "Alabama" and "Arizona" in giving this playwright a high place among American dramatists.

Perhaps the strongest indication of "The Earl of Pawtucket's" vitality is the fact that it is the only non-musical offering that has ever succeeded in playing through one of New York's hot summers. Lawrance D'Orsay who, from the first, has appeared in the title role, has acquired, by virtue of the hit he made in this play, a high rank among America's best-liked comedian stars.

The play has for its theme an English peer, Lord Cardington, and his adventures during a short visit to America. The Earl's efforts to pass for an American in spite of his pronounced English accent and mannerisms, his attempts to convince people of his intimate knowledge of the Yankee town of Pawtucket, where he claims to have been born, his predicament when vengeful lawyers confront him with a demand for alimony in arrears, of which he knows absolutely nothing, his arrest for having made way with an American and Lord Cardington (articles belonging to both gentlemen having been found in his effects) and the final unraveling of the tangled skein, are treated in Mr. Thomas' happiest manner, and as may readily be believed furnish unlimited material for laughter-making purposes.

The action of the play is all in the famous Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, and the decorations and furnishings have been carefully duplicated. In the cast, besides Mr. D'Orsay, are Jane Peyton, Florence Robinson, Mary Elizabeth Forbes, Charles W. Stokes, Herbert Fortier, Harry Frees, S. S. Wiltsie, Stokes Sullivan, A. P. Thomas, W. B. Pollock, H. H. Sleight, T. P. Murphy, Ernest Joy, Frederic Hawthorne and Ernest Elton.

Lafayette—"Girls Will Be Girls."

"Girls Will Be Girls" is coming to the Lafayette Opera House next week, and is announced as of the most pleasing and laughter-provoking attractions so far presented at that theater. Headed by Al Leech and "The Three Rosebuds," the company of forty persons undertakes to present a melange of mirth and music. Melville Baker and Joseph Hart are the authors of this production. It deals with the raiding of a cocking main and the marvelous escape of Prof. Lodge (Leech), who, in this dignified role, makes a mad dash for liberty, leaves his note-book behind, and the hayseed detectives find this and waste a lot of time trying to find the owner. They do not succeed, for the playrights didn't intend that they should. Among the songs which have scored heavily in the six weeks' run of "Girls Will Be Girls" just completed at the Fourteenth Street Theater, New York, are "Sally," "Etiquette," "That Little Girl Is You," "How Do You Do?" "Gee, Wouldn't That Be Great," and "Abou Ben Ali." As may be expected from the title, girls are the feature of the show.

Al Leech and the Three Rosebuds in "Girls Will Be Girls," at the Lafayette.

MABEL M'KINLEY,
Heading the Bill at Chase's.

Chase's—Mabel McKinley and Vaudeville.

With another song said to surpass "Anona," Mabel McKinley will come to Washington this week, and her friends and well-wishers here, where she once played an important social role, will flock to the theater to shower their congratulations and manifest their esteem. The new song that has supplanted "Anona" is called "Karama," and Miss McKinley describes it as a romance of old Japan.

A sharp and surprising contrast will be afforded by Musical Kleist, who claims the title of "king of black art," but who also extends his amusement domain to cover mirth and magic, which are important elements in the new creation he devised for his admirers this season. M. Jolly and Mlle. Velia are recent importations from the Folies Bergere, Paris, and they pirouette and pantomime with the extraordinary vivacity that characterizes the terpsichorean artists attached to this famous European vaudeville house. The Misses Mills and Morris will appear as black face minstrel girls, "a la Dockstader," in which act they are being rapidly initiated, as the popular fancy has turned toward such specialties as a welcome change. In the world of dogs it is said there are none cleverer than those trained by Herbert, and this well-known director will appear with his troupe, embracing Dink, the high diver; Diana, that does the slide for life, and other nervy four-legged acrobats in loop-the-loop. George

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FRANCES RING,
One of the Attractions in "The County Chairman."

LAWRANCE D'ORSAY,
Repeating His Tour in "The Earl of Pawtucket."

AMERICAN GENTLEMAN IS LIKE HIS COUSIN

Lawrance D'Orsay Says Our Men of Fashion Outdo the Fashion Plates.

Fear has given place to conviction. There is no longer any doubt. D'Orsay has spoken. Not D'Orsay of the Guards, D'Orsay of "The Earl of Pawtucket."

In speech slow but sure, and with a copyrighted drawl, this Lawrance D'Orsay solemnly affirms that the American swell has grown so like his English cousin that there's hardly any difference, doncherknow.

In fact, if we're to believe D'Orsay—and who would doubt him?—the real man of fashion is even more English than the London chappie.

D'Orsay discussed this vital question in grave seriousness and with a preliminary explanation. Said he, stroking his drooping mustache:

"The gentleman, whether American or English, is the best the world can obtain and give; consequently, it is not surprising that at this time there is very little difference to be discovered in the true type, no matter what the nationality. No doubt, in Dickens' time, when this country was young and its people crude in manners, the great novelist was correct in his diagnosis. The accident of birth makes, of course, a certain difference and exclusiveness. The aristocracy of brains and money, and perhaps, a younger generation and country, goes to an older country for its repose, manner and fads.

A Change of Front.

"I remember when I first visited America that the Englishman was a byword; his clothes, his manner, his speech were laughing stocks. But now that is all altered. And, thanks to the great and true friendliness existing between the cousins, they visit each other more frequently, with the result that they absorb each other's manners, methods, and dress, and there is little to distinguish the American society man from the Londoner.

"English styles are the vogue, and to be 'beastly English, you know,' and to wear a ring with your crest on it, emblazoning your English descent, is quite the thing. Gentlemen dress for the theater now; they used not to. They use a walking stick, and I have seen one or two (dear old boys) with a monocle. I tried it myself years ago, but I couldn't see through it, and so got run over and quickly dropped the habit. I hope none of my dear American friends will ever suffer likewise. I never turned up my trousers, either in wet weather or fine, but I notice that here the habit has considerable favor, even in the finest weather.

"But, seriously, a gentleman is always a gentleman the world over. Fads and foibles don't alter him; they only make the fashionable men dress and move and look alike, just as the fashion happens. An American gentleman is so bright and clever that he never makes a mistake. He knows a good fellow when he meets him, and doesn't waste a whole year in making his acquaintance, while waiting for an introduction by a duke or an earl.

Englishman a Homebody.

"The Englishman born to the purple and leisure is always from boyhood a true sportsman. His home life, his dogs and horses, I believe, he loves more than any other nationality in the world. In America the society man travels more and moves about more. He is a good sportsman and a splendid host, and always a courteous gentleman. But the fervor of attachment of the Englishman is for his home, dogs, and horses.

"The American is out and about more, and he is a much greater theatergoer than his English prototype. In England we rather avoid public places and are content to live in the quiet surroundings of home life with our friends in the same set. Our especial pets are beautiful gardens and greenhouses.

"Club life in England among the smart set is very quiet, methodical and exclusive. The 'dear old boys' and 'chappies' go through their eventless daily routine, which they wouldn't vary for worlds, with a regularity and precision that are sublime. When a national stir comes—like a war—they sit up, shake themselves, talk a bit more to each other, but in the same even tones, get into their uniform, fight, come back, get the Victoria Cross, and resume the even tenor of their lives as if nothing had happened.

"Hurrah for the red, white and blue on both our glorious flags!"

MISS RUSSELL LOST IN ROLES ASSUMED

Personality of Actress Confused With That of the Sentimental Little Maiden She Acts.

Life on the stage is anything but real, and yet the footlights cast a glamour which makes it strangely and irresistibly realistic. Across the boards men and women walk, playing their allotted parts, and while the spectator can but realize that it is all a fanciful tale which is told graphically merely for his amusement, there is something so human about it all that he often finds it difficult to separate the actor from his part, or to remember that the successes and failures, the joys and sorrows which are enacted so naturally are not as real as they appear. It is this which explains why, when he speaks of Annie Russell, he invariably thinks of a sweet and sincere but sentimental little maiden, clad in a gown of becoming simplicity.

In the course of Miss Russell's career on the stage she has played many parts, and while she has presented an almost unbroken series of successful creations, some of which have been strongly emotional, the character which has usually been assigned to her has been that of the ingenuous rustic damsel, for in this line of work she has exhibited a degree of individuality which has brought her recognition as one of the best actresses on the American stage. The fact that she has been able, through fineness of art and personal magnetism, to elevate such roles to a plane incomparably above and beyond that of the mere soubrette, has earned for her the praise which is the due of all genuine creators. Today the roles which she has done so much to popularize are invariably referred to as "Annie Russell parts," and the success or failure of the actress who assumes such a character is based upon the degree of naturalness with which the part is played.

There was a time when the unsophisticated damsel of the stage was a kittenish, if not an actually vulgar creature. Today such an interpretation would not be accepted in any decent theater. It will not be denied that this change in popular opinion is largely due to Annie Russell. The average actress would be satisfied if she could rest quietly in the enjoyment of such a success, but Annie Russell is not "an average actress," and if one wishes to know how slightly she is influenced by a sense of self-satisfaction with her work, it is only necessary to meet her when she is willing to talk of her hopes and her aspirations for greater things.

MME. REJANE HERE TWELVE WEEKS ONLY

Brilliant Actress Plays in New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Montreal.

Mme. Gabrielle Rejane, who is to be seen here soon with her French company in a repertoire of French plays, is a particular pet of the Parisian French.

Throughout France, perhaps, the "Divine Sara" may still occupy a warm place in the affections of the provincial French, but there is no doubt that in Paris proper, in artistic bohemian circles, among society and among boulevardiers, from the half-grown girl who carries madame's new hat in a highly polished wooden box to her on the evening of the new reception, to la grande madame herself; in the foreign colony of diplomats and artists, and in the world that moves, the name of Gabrielle Rejane is one to conjure with. Besides, to all the French players, her comrades on the French stage, the vivacious, volatile, high-strung, ebullient, charitable, and good-natured artistle, is one to whom they all go in their hours of sorrow and distress, to obtain either pity or sympathy or substantial financial aid.

Born to the Stage.

Mme. Rejane was, so to speak, born to the stage. She spent her early childhood about the lobby of L'Ambigue, where her father took tickets to the main entrance to the theater and her mother attended to the buffet. It was while living in this environment—meeting all the best actors and actresses of the time—that her ambition to become an actress was awakened.

Her father died when she was only five years old. At a school she became acquainted with the daughter of Jules Simon, the minister of public instruction. Through her schoolmate friend, Gabrielle managed to be admitted to the Conservatoire, where she studied very hard and graduated first in her class. She was given a small part in one of M. Meilhac's comedies, and acquitted herself creditably.

Later on she was engaged at the Vaudeville for two years, followed by seasons at the Odeon and Varieties, after which she may be said to have been fairly launched upon her career. When she achieved the prominence of individual starhood, she filled engagements at nearly every prominent theater in Paris, making her own productions, acting, in fact, as actress-manager.

She is well-known and well liked in London where sl

a year, playing a season of a couple of months in the English metropolis and provinces—always with financial success.

She has been to this country—in 1894—when Abbey, Schoeffel & Grau paid her 200,000 francs for 100 performances.

This season her American tour is under the management of Liebler & Co., whose contract with madame calls for even a larger sum than the one she received from her first firm of American impresarios. Her American season is for twelve weeks only, distributed as follows: Four weeks in New York, two weeks in Chicago, two weeks in Boston, one week in Philadelphia, one week in Washington, one week divided up between Indianapolis, Louisville, Lexington, Ky., Dayton, and Columbus, Ohio, and Wheeling, W. Va., and a supplementary week in Montreal.

French Plays Exclusively.

She is best known in this country as the original creator of the role of Zaza. The theatergoing public will be particularly interested in seeing this performance played in French by the woman whose genius is responsible for "Zaza's" success. But whether as Zaza, or as Germaine, the heroine of "La Robe Rouge," whether in "L'Hirondelle," her new play, or in "Ma Cousine," "Divorcons," "La Petite Marquise," "Amoureuse," or in Ibsen's "The Doll's House," or in "La Parisienne," "La Fassarelle," or in "La Doulloureuse"—which she has chosen for her opening bill in New York—she takes all the prizes which the theater can offer an artist, and then goes home at night to rejoice with a mother's devotion over the welfare of her children, to whom she is fondly attached.

Madame brings over her own company of French players, and her repertoire is selected from the following plays: "Divorcons," by M. Sardou; "La Doulloureuse," by Maurice Donnay; "Zaza," by MM. Berton and Simon; "La Petite Marquise," by MM. Meilhac and Halevy; "L'Hirondelle," by Dario Niccodemi; "La Robe Rouge," by M. Brieux; "Amoureuse," by M. de Porto-Riche; "Le Parisienne," by M. Becque; "La Fassarelle," by M de Croisset and Mme Gressac; "The Doll's House," by Ibsen; "La Course Aux Flambeau," "Lolotte," by MM. Meilhac and Halevy; "Incognito," by Hary Orbien; "La Visite de Noces," by Alexandre Dumas, and "Ma Cousine," by Henri Meilhac.